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THE DIALECTIC OF "MĀYĀ" AND PRINCIPLES OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN INDIAN LITERATURE

daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te

-Bhagavad Gītā, 7.14[1]

The argument of this paper may be briefly summarised as follows: first, a note on methodology which relies heavily on Marxist-Structuralist[2] notions of the relationship between the "text" and the *Real*; second, an attempt at defining the "mediated *Real*" in Indian thought to which I give the title "meta-text I"; third, a look at the transformation of this "meta-text" (which I argue is a *construct*) into texts "proper" designated "text II" and "text III". At the receiving end of the sequence is the reader for whom all these ("meta-text I" and "texts II & III") are ways into the "absolute *Real*". The paper goes on to argue that because "meta-text I" becomes the "absolute pole of reference" and because as a *construct* (a "canonical text" in fact) it has already "interpreted" the *Real*, it is in Marxist terminology a "flawed microcosm" and should "behave" like any ordinary text. But the dominance of this "meta-text" in Indian thought and life has been such that it is the only *image* of the *Real* which the reader possesses. If this is so, then the relationship between literature and the historical matrix in Indian literature is between one text ("texts I & II") and another ("meta-text I") and both of these are heavily mediated. This paper proposes to explore tentatively the ramifications of this.[3]

The Methodology

I take as my heuristic model a reasonably straight-forward comment on the Marxist approach to the literary text. In a recent article Hayden White writes: "In Marxist criticism, the literary work is considered as a microcosm of the macrocosm, the flaw in question resulting from the *form* that the work of art is compelled to assume in a given system of commodity exchange".[4] Within such a theory, the historical matrix is further given a chrono-

logical character which has a dialectal relationship with the periods of social history (slave, feudal, capitalist). Furthermore, the forms of the works of literature and their latent content must be shown to be "products of the forms of consciousness *possible* within such a system". In other words, the ordering of reality which occurs in the literary work is directly related to the historical processes in terms of which the work has been written ("vulgar Marxists" would call it "homologous").[5]

The literary work in fact structures the historical matrix so as to manifest through it the overall bent and tensions inherent within the system. Hence a basically diachronic event is given a synchronic presence in the literary work in such a manner that it becomes a kind of "living organism" (the phrase is Wolfgang Iser's)[6] which is both linked with history on the one hand and with the reader on the other. The process itself, as Alastair Fowler remarks, breaks the "hermeneutic circle"[7] which leads to the universalising through the literary artifact of the historical context so that it is *available* to the reader whose own historical period is different from the text's.

The text has a dialectal relationship with history. (The word dialectic is here used simply as "a contradiction determining continual interaction".)[8] Quite clearly to see the text in terms of a convergence of structure and process (the construct and the historical reality) is to over-simplify the relationship. Yet, it seems to me to be a more effective description than the usual dichotomies of *form* and *content* which tend to assume different meanings in different contexts.

Meta-text I

The next step in the argument is to analyse how "reality" or the "historical process" is structured in Indian thought and what happens when the "flawed microcosm" (that is the text proper) must capture not the "macrocosm" but a structuring of the latter which is itself mediated and hence "flawed". I raise these issues within the concept of a "meta-text" and discuss them with reference to *māyā*, the Indian principle of *illusion* or the *principium individuationis* to use Schopenhauer's phrase borrowed by Nietzsche.[9] In Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, the word *māyā* has a large entry and its meanings range from the Vedic "deception", "fraud" and "witchcraft" to the "source of the visible universe" of the Sāṃkhya and Vedānta systems of thought. I would like to restrict its usage in this paper to the definition given by the great monist thinker Śankara (AD 788-820), the best-known exponent

of *advaita* (non-dualism).[10] I am aware that some centuries later Rāmānuja (eleventh century) attempted a re-definition of the dialectic of *māyā* within a system of modified non-dualism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*) and after him Mādhva (1199-1276) took us into the heart of Indian pluralism with his claims of a completely *dvaitic* (dualistic) system.[11] Later still, others, and notably Nimbārka (twelfth century) and Vallabha (fifteenth century) attempted even more subtle re-definitions within their respective *saṃpradāya* (traditions).[12] However, it must be noted that the various commentators differ from each other not in any *prima facie* or "ontological" redefinition of *māyā* but disagree only on the issue of the relationship between this concept and Brahman.

What Śankara did in his commentary on the *Vedānta* was to *structure* the relationship between Brahman and the phenomenal world; in other words, he stratified and froze all history into a "metaphysical encounter". History as a day of Brahmā was perhaps in need of such organisation to make the relationship between man and it more meaningful.[13] As described by Śankara, the "dialectic of *māyā*" took the following form. There is only one universal Being, Brahman or *Paramātman*, the Supreme Self. This Being does not have attributes, it cannot be predicated, it is thought itself. However, we do perceive ourselves and the world of phenomena because Brahman is associated with a certain power called *māyā* or *avidyā* (nescience) to which is attributed this world. This power, writes George Thibault, is in fact a "principle of illusion; the undefinable cause owing to which there seems to exist a material world comprehending distinct individual existences."[14] Within the various components of this material world there exists the essence of Brahman as *jīva* but the power of *māyā* is so strong that it is not possible to perceive its existence. The dialectic to which I have already alluded arises precisely because of the eternal recurrence of *māyā* - to transcend *māyā* a kind of absolute knowledge of the self is necessary and this absolute knowledge may be presented within some such statement as "*ātman-vidyā* is *Brahman-vidyā*", self-knowledge is knowledge of Brahman. Only through a recognition of this, through *tat tvam asi*, does one achieve final release. Without this self-assurance, through, for instance, the Vedic paths of "Works", *karmakānda* and *jñānakānda* (action and knowledge) one simply arrives at an understanding of *Iṣvara*, the lowest Brahman and not the Highest Brahman. Only in the final moment of release does one withdraw from the influence of *māyā* and achieve total Oneness. In the words of Radhakrishnan:

> Works are vain and bind us firmly to this unreal cosmic process (*saṃsāra*), the endless chain of cause

and effect. Only the wisdom that the universal reality and the individual self are identical can bring us redemption. When this wisdom arises, the ego is dissolved, the wandering ceases and we have perfect joy and blessedness.[15]

For the purposes of my argument, the significant thing is that Śankara's system is a *construct*, a structuring of reality or history in such a manner that only the dialectic remains meaningful, that is to say, that the constant, organic tension between the individual and *māyā* is the important, if not the only, mode of "operation". To this end, knowledge of the self is important but that knowledge is not a fictional search for authentic values in a world of unauthentic values (after Goldmann) or a re-enactment of a unified sensibility (after T.S. Eliot, Leavis etc.). Hence our proposition: Indian literature cannot transform the *Real*, it cannot be a "flawed microcosm" because the macrocosm in terms of which literature works is itself a "flawed" typological re-statement of the Brahman-*māyā*-Self impasse.[16] This construct, which I have called the "meta-text", has been bequeathed upon Indian literature as a sort of hidden universal. In the rest of this paper, I will try to demonstrate how the "meta-text" gets transformed into principles of narrative structure in two Indian texts, one medieval, the other modern.

Text II

On the surface the transformation of the dialectic into narrative should be a reasonably straight-forward matter. The Self (let us say the hero) is ensnared by *māyā*, becomes totally immersed in *saṃsāra*, discovers the futility of "works" but finally achieves *moksha* through an awareness of his own *ātman*. The lines of the dialectic are clear-cut as neither end of the triangle is in an oppositional relationship to another. Between Śankara and Tulsīdāsa (1532-1623) the author of our text proper ("text II"), *Rāmacaritamānasa*,[17] a whole body of exegetical literature intervenes and the methods of achieving *moksha* undergo considerable modification. Two important ideas have a direct bearing on this text. The first is the growing significance of *bhakti mārga*, the path of devotion, and the second is the concept of the *aparaṃ saguṇam Brahmā*, the Lord who is also *avatāric*, that is capable of incarnating himself through time. The latter idea may sound very much like the historical Jesus - God "translates" Himself into time and in doing so affirms the reality of history.[18] In Hinduism, however, such historical reincranation never occurs, the

avatārs of the *saguṇa Brahmā* as Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, for instance, always occur outside time. To return to the two points, the presence of *bhakti* and *saguṇa Brahmā* meant that there was a real triumph over *māyā* possible through devotion to a god incarnate. So ideally, one should expect a slight change within the narrative transformation outlined above: the Self (let us say our hero again) through *bhakti* (devotion) overcomes *māyā* and merges into Brahman. But there remains one major problem. Having frozen history, the *construct* (the "meta-text") does not lend itself to narrative transformation too readily; it has simply internalised all sense of progression. To give it a narrative "form" would mean reverting to a sense of history, affirming the dynamic and temporal nature of existence. It seems paradoxical that this is so but the most important *bhakti* texts clearly bear this out, a sort of literary helplessness in the face of this formidable system mediating between the Indian and the beyond. Hence whereas the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulsīdāsa (begun c. 1574 and commonly known as the *Rāmāyaṇa*) does have a strong narrative thread which follows its Sanskrit prototype (the Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* 3rd century B.C.) quite closely, it nevertheless does not demonstrate how Rāma himself (the hero) transcends *māyā* as a result of a process of self-awareness, the basic thrust of the genre. Obviously the matter is complicated by the fact that in Tulsīdāsa's version Rāma cannot be dissociated from a tradition which has already occulted him. As Viśnu incarnate, *māyā* is no more than a principle which flows from him anyway.

To get out of this difficulty Tulsīdāsa, I believe, constantly frames the tale of Rāma. The frames are then re-cast within existing ones and one gets a kind of Chinese box effect with the important exception that the story itself does not change, it simply gets more and more abstract. Each repetition, naturally, involves the teller of the tale who finds liberation as a result of telling the story and the reader for whom reading is a devotional process which destroys "*avidyā* which is the root of re-birth".[19] The main narrator of the tale of Rāma is Śiva (who frames the narrative of the others) whose technique is based on the principle of *sevaka sevya bhāva* (the devotion of the servant for the master). Śiva narrates the story to his consort Umā (Pārvati) and within this he re-tells the tale as told to Garud (the eagle) by Kāka Bhuśuṇdi (the crow) who in turn received it from Lomaś Ṛiṣi.[20] In each case the tale acts as a meditative exercise, the participation in which is essential for *moksha*. The reader who, finally, makes such articulation possible, participates in its attainment. So what we get here is a picture of the "meta-text" at work again- the world exists within the paradigm which informs that *construct*

- without getting itself transformed in any significant way.

Towards the end of the seventh and final book of the epic, the *Uttara Kāndh*, Tulsīdāsa does attempt to fill the dialectic of *māyā* out though, admittedly, that "filling out" is no more than an imposition of a set of poetic conventions onto the construct. In a symbolic sort of a fashion,[21] the crow Bhuśundi in his version of the tale personalises *māyā* as a female *śakti* which binds, among others, the ṛiṣis, devas and even Śiva. Yet this *śakti* is the Lord's *sevika*, his servant. Already the paradox is being worked out within an established pattern of sexual roles; the abstractions are being given "live" significance. In the central *caupāī* ("verse") where this is raised we read that the other paths to *moksha* (*jñāna, vairāgya, yoga* and *vigjñāna*) are all *puruṣa* that is masculine and being physically strong cannot triumph over women's strength which is, of course, *māyā*, the Lord's *sevika*. The relevant passage reads:

jñāna birāga joga bigjñānā, ye saba puruṣa sunehu Harijānā
puruṣa pratāpa prabala saba bhātī, ablā abal sahaj jaḍ jātī[22]

If masculine strength (the unenlightened soul) cannot triumph over *māyā* (which is feminine), how else does one explain the problem? Tulsīdāsa claims that it is only through *bhakti* (devotion) that one can get out of *samṣāra*. And his logic goes something like this.. *Māyā* is feminine and is full of guile like a temple dancer, the *nartakī*. But *bhakti* is also feminine (this is a case of gender classification) and it is identified with Sītā, Rāma's wife (by an obvious synecdochic process).[23] Hence Tulsīdāsa writes:

māyā bhagati sunehu tumha doau, nāri barga jānai saba koau
puni Raghubīrahi bhagiti piyārī, māyā khalu nartikī bicārī[24]

This "allegorisation of *māyā*", for lack of a better phrase, is central to Indian literature, especially post-purāṇic (hence vernacular) literatures of India. What happens in the seventh book of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* is that the *construct* is given a "literary" dimension, though as yet a purely narrative thread has not been superimposed - the *nartakī* as a character in fiction does not participate in the life of the hero. This tradition is, of course, not new. In Kabīr, over a century before, *māyā* had been referred to as *kanak kāṃmini*, the seductress who ensnares and then repulses the *kāṃmī*, the male.[25] But limited as this change was, the conventions which arose became important to the other Indian writers. The recognition of this change is, I believe, central to Indian literary criticism and theory. For while the "dancer" in Indian

fiction may be no more than just that (one remembers W.B. Yeats) and as such indistinguishable from the dance, it is nevertheless a device which directly recalls the *nartakī-māyā* dichotomy I have outlined. Moreover, as Tulsīdāsa's version was related to *bhakti*, in itself a Southern Dravidian concept,[26] it acquired very quickly the significance of a universal image which could be utilised by all Indian writers.

Tulsīdāsa's *bhakti*-dancer/*nartakī*/*māyā*-Brahman framework is an important step towards the "moving outwards" of this dialectic but the final transformation of this dialectic, in so far as it pertains to this paper, had to wait until an alien form had made its way into Indian consciousness. This brought with it tensions of its own for because the construct was so strong and all pervasive, this form, the novel, itself a product of a western economic stage of development, counteracting and paralleling that economic system, reflecting and modifying the dominant ideology of the ruling classes and getting progressively more and more reified as a consequence of the growing disjuncture between the individual and the economic system (the conflict essentially between "use value" and "work value"), this form had to transform a "false" ideology which was not the ideology of the ruling classes but rather of the ruling intellectuals, the Brahmins who like Śankara (and indeed the "writers" of the *Vedānta*) had already structured reality. The novel could not overlook this because it reflected Indian ways of thinking generally and whenever it tried to reconcile itself to what lay beyond *māyā*, the economic "base" of Marx, it found itself lumbered and bogged down with this construct. This I believe is the major problem confronting the theorist of the Indian novel and one which needs closer analysis.

Text III

The basic plot of R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*[27] is very straightforward. A shopkeeper's son, Raju, becomes a tourist guide, gets involved with Rosie, the wife of "Marco" an archaelogist, encourages her to take up her "family" career as a dancer, is convicted of forgery, leaves prison just "to go somewhere" and in spite of himself emerges a *swāmī* who fasts for rain in a drought-stricken village. On the level of the paradigm sketched (the "meta-text") the following possibility emerges: Rosie as the *nartakī* is *māyā* which ensnares Raju, the *jīva* in search of *ātman-vidyā*. To discover self-knowledge (at this stage a concept which lacks any religious dimension) he pursues the path of *karma* in a Protestant sort of a fashion but gets even more entangled within the web of *māyā*, the dancer. Finally, he embraces *bhakti* (one is speaking of

narrative ordering and not intention here), devotion to the Lord and itself a feminine principle, which enables him to move away from Raju the guide and fraudulent pundit to Raju the *swāmī sui generis* who, if the construct is correct, finally escapes *saṃsāra* and finds release. Where Tulsīdāsa (working within established Indian forms) had simply conventionalised the construct by simply hinting at a narrative possibility,[28] and had written what Charlotte Vaudeville has called a *bhakti racnā* (a treatise) and not a *purāṇa* (narrative) or a *tantra* (a yogic exercise) *per se*,[29] R.K. Narayan is much more aware of the narrative possibilities implied in the tension between the *nartakī*, the self and *bhakti*.[30] Instead of framing his narrative (frames are still used in *The Guide*) so that it is Velan who finds ultimate release because he has heard the tale of Raju (as Umā, Garuḍ and the reader find in the *Rāmacaritamānasa*), the dialectic is given the overall *pattern* of the "classical" novel in which the hero finds a realistic basis for his own existence. Part of the problem with the novel is that it still seems to be hankering after integrated civilizations.[31] In India the bourgeois ethic has not completely fractured that inner harmony about which Georg Lukács has written. Against this background, the convergence of the novel form - exploratory, social, dialectically related to history and so forth - and the *construct* which always falsifies the *Real* creates not only problems of interpretation but questions the overall status of the novel as a *genre* in India.

Let us now follow what R.K. Narayan does with the dialectic more closely. "My problems would not have started...but for Rosie", Raju tells Velan and adds "She looked just the orthodox dancer". Early on in the narrative Rosie's identification with the *nartakī-māyā* "principle" is carefully stressed. When she reaches Malgudi her one desire is to see a cobra: "Can you show me a cobra - a king cobra it must be, which can dance to the music of a flute?" (p.47). And as the cobra danced, Raju watched Rosie:

> She watched it swaying with the raptest attention. She stretched out her arm slightly and swayed it in imitation of the movement; she swayed her whole body to the rhythm - for just a second, but that was sufficient to tell me what she was, the greatest dancer of the century. (pp.60-61)

Later the lines of the identification between Rosie and the *nartakī* become more clear-cut. She tells Raju:

> "I belong to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers; my mother, grandmother, and, before her, her mother. Even as a young girl, I danced in our village temple. You know how our caste is viewed?" "It's the noblest caste on earth", I said. "We are viewed as public women", she said plainly, and I was thrilled to hear the word. "We are not considered respectable; we are not considered civilized". (p.92)

The temple-dancer is, of course, essential to the temple. But she is not a mere *dāsī* of the Lord; she exists as the weaver of the unreal world; the veil past which it is the function of devotees to perceive. Her presence indeed makes that perception so much more difficult. In Narayan the initial *construct* is being given a felt recreation within a narrative but the narrative itself cannot acquire an independent status outside the construct because it tends to organise the Indian's attitudes towards the world.

But first the total absorption into *saṃsāra* must take place. Raju is completely enamoured of Rosie. "All my mental powers were now turned to keep her within my reach, and keep her smiling all the time", (p.104) he explains. By the time she emerges as the only true reality, he has disowned friends, mother, relatives, all. And as she acquires more and more the status of the "snake", the "she-devil", the "demon" and so forth, the further removed she becomes and begins to create a world of her own.[32]

The central episode of the novel (Raju's arrest at the hands of his friend, the District Superintendent of Police) occurs when Nalini, for that is what Rosie is now called, dances the rare snake dance for which a special "mood was needed". (p.189) The snake-dance in this episode is further connected with Śiva, the Natrāja, the Lord of the dance who is part of the creative force behind the world of illusion. Perhaps too self-consciously, Narayan inserts Raju's mother's warning, "A serpent girl; Be careful", and undercuts the reader's own awareness of the analogy. After the arrest for forgery, the rest is straightforward: gaol, release, escape to the temple, sacrifice of the self (a consequence of a deception which misfires)[33] and *moksha*. The latter remains contentious to the end - Raju seems to feel the rains coming down on the hills but Narayan does not convert this into any kind of an affirmation of release or Oneness of some sort. A life which ironically had become "valuable to the country" (p.219) and to the American television company simply enters *sunya*, the immense void.

Though I have used throughout this paper the dialectic of *māyā* simply as a model in terms of which we may gain access to certain Indian texts (the model, of course, as Iser wrote, cannot be equated with the literary text itself),[34] I nevertheless believe, at this stage of my explorations, that the issue of the transformation of the *construct* into narrative principles in Indian literature - central as the ideology which infuses itis to Indian thought generally - takes us to the heart of three important and related problems. The first concerns the problem of a literary theory for Indian literature, a problem magnified by the very obviously religious nature of the creative act implied in the poetic *śāstra*.[35] I have attempted to explore a few limited lines of growth by subjecting the literature to what I have called, perhaps erroneously, the dialectic of *māyā*. I have found that within Indian texts ("text II") - texts which belong essentially to Indian generic forms - the narrative transformation is only an "allegorical" one: to re-constitute *māyā* into a sequence charged with temporal significations would, I have argued, lead to a reversal of the initial "freezing" which had occurred. The next problem is the relationship between the world of literature and the original macrocosm which it attempts to capture. However, if the original is itself flawed and as *māyā*-self-Brahman a "fictional" construct, then the relationship of the literary work to it is at best mediated by (through) this principle of illusion or at worst becomes a reflection of a flawed reality which has no historical basis. The final problem arises with the introduction of an alien form which, we are told, is the ideal form which captures the dialectal tensions within the historical matrix. The novel in India is precisely that form but the argument of this paper is that because the weight of the construct, the "meta-text", is so over-riding (men's beliefs are in fact structured and conditioned by it), the Indian novel, here *The Guide*, cannot break past the false macrocosm and confront the historical processes themselves. Saturated as the macrocosm itself is with what Terry Eagleton calls "certain ideological modes of perception, certain codified ways of interpreting reality",[36] the combination and transmutation of forms become doubly difficult for Indian writers.

Naturally, a much more thorough investigation is necessary before one can properly speak about narrative structure, constructs, the relevance of Marxist theories to Indian literature and so forth. But if I am right (or at least partially right) in contending that the *construct* as outlined in the "meta-text" is the dominant background against which Indian literature must be measured, then it is reasonable to assume that Indian literary texts carry within themselves theories about Indian literature.

Ultimately, an awareness of this may be the only way out of an immense paradox.

Notes

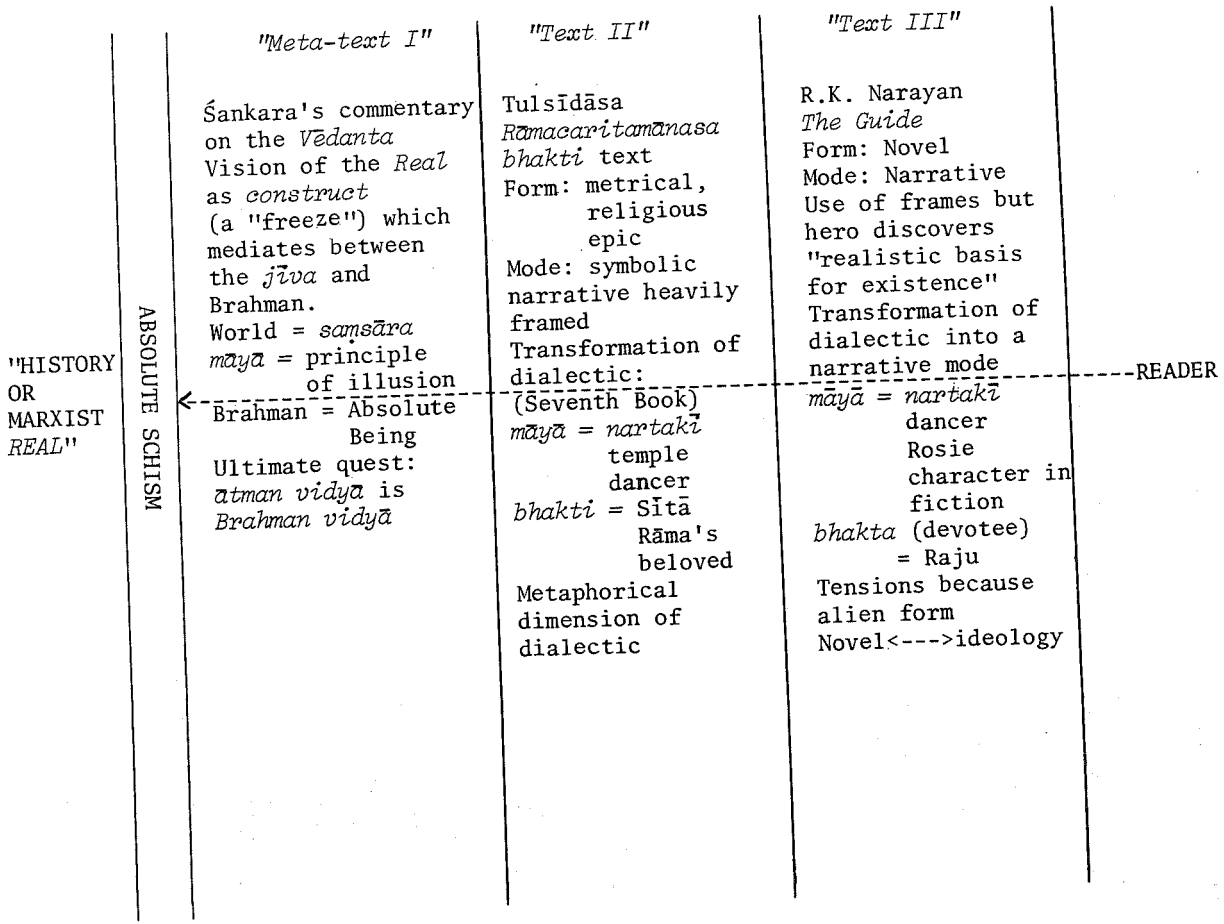
1. "This creative power (*māyā*) of Mine, consisting of divine elements, is hard to transcend. Only those who put their trust in Me alone go beyond it".
2. Especially, Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1971) and *The Prison-House of Language* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1972). See also Terry Eagleton, *Literature and Ideology* (London: Atlantic Highlands, 1976) and Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1977).
3. See diagram at the end of the paper.
4. Hayden White, "The Problems of Change in Literary History", *New Literary History*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975), p.101.
5. See, for e.g., Lucien Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1975).
6. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1974). For a fuller phenomenological approach see Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George G. Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1973) and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley & Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1973).
7. Alastair Fowler, "The Selection of Literary Constructs", *New Literary History*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975), 39-55.
8. Richard Waswo, "The Petrarchan Tradition as a Dialectic of Limits", *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, Vol. XI, No.1, (Spring, 1978), 1-16. (After Frederick Goldin)
9. Frederich Neitzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy & The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing, (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p.22 (After Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, Part I)
10. I follow Surendranath Gupta here. See his *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Five Volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1922).
11. See Raja Rao, *The Serpent and the Rope* (London: Murray, 1960), p. 43: "Duality is anti-Indian; the non-dual affirms the truth".
12. See S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavad Gītā*, (2nd edition, London: Allen & Unwin, 1949), pp. 16ff. for an excellent summary.
13. *Bhagavad Gītā*, 8.17:

    sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ,
    rātriṁ yuga-shasr'āntāṁ te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ.
    "A day of Brahmā lasts a thousand ages, a night equally long. Only by knowing this can man know day and night".

("ages" = 4,320,000 years)
See *Raja Rao, op.cit.*, p.85: "That is why Indians wrote no history..."

14. *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa with the Commentary by Śankara*, trans. George Thibault. Vol. XXXIV of "The Sacred Books of the East" (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896), p.xxv.
15. S. Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17.
16. R.C. Zaehner in his *Bhagavad Gītā* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) indeed suggests that this is precisely the problem with the Marxist vision. In the relevant passages of his introduction (notably pp.8-9 & 22) he seems to be identifying the Marxist *Real* in fact with this dialectic of *māyā* (the "meta-text"): "Matter or material Nature is dynamic (as in Marx) and includes everything that is subject to change...". Naturally, this means that the absolute *Real* or truth remains elusive even to the Marxist who in fact operates, like the Indian, within mediated systems. Zaehner sees the mystical experience (especially in his *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* (London: Athlone, 1960) and *Concordant Discord* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970) as the only way out of the dilemma. According to him, the *Real* is not the absolute consciousness of Marx ("Consciousness does not determine life; life determines consciousness", wrote Marx in *The German Ideology*) but the knowledge of Brahman.
17. Tulsīdāsa, *Rāmacaritamānasa*, ed. S.N. Caube (Kāśī, 1948). All references are made to this edition.
18. John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness of the Remembered Past* (Cambridge Mass: M.I.T., 1968) pp.22ff.
19. F.R. Allchin, "The Reconciliation of *Jñāna* and *Bhakti* in *Rāmacaritamānasa*", *Religious Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (March, 1976), pp. 81-91.
20. A complete breakdown of temporal and spatial categories occurs in Kāka Bhuśuṇḍi's narrative because he "participates" in the perennial birth of Rāma.
21. The process is basically allegorical. However, I prefer the word symbolic because allegory as a form is a Christian mode of operation in literature, grounded as it is within a specific ethical and moral system.
22. *Rāmacaritamānasa*, VII, 115, *caupāī*.
    "Listen Garuḍ, knowledge, asceticism, work and science are all masculine and being masculine their strength is of a different kind (and therefore they cannot overpower) women who are in fact weak (and fragile)".
23. Vijay Mishra, "*Rāmacaritamānasa:* the Re-writing of a Sanskrit Epic", *Indian Literature*, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (May-June, 1978), pp.121-137.

24. *Rāmacaritamānasa*, VII, 116, *caupāī*.
"*Māyā* and *bhakti* are feminine, this is known to all. But *bhakti* is Rāma's beloved and *māyā* is a helpless temple dancer."
The notion of Rāma's beloved coalesces *bhakti* and Sītā into one category. This conjunction brings together within one paradox both *bhakti* and *māyā*.
25. Vijay Mishra, "Two Truths are Told: Tagore's *Kabīr*", *South Asia*, New Series, Vol. I, No. 2 (September, 1978).
26. Mariasusai Dhavamony, *Love of God according to Saiva Siddhanta*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971).
27. R.K. Narayan, *The Guide*, (Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1975). First published in 1958. All pages references are made to this edition.
28. Even in Tulsīdāsa, a case for a total narrative transformation of the dialectic can be made if one looks at the sub-heroes of the epic, especially Bharat, Bālī and Bhibhīṣana.
29. Charlotte Vaudeville, *Étude sur les Sources et la Composition du Rāmāyaṇa de Tulsī-das*, 2 vols. (Pondichéry: Institut Francais D'indologie, 1965), Hindi trans. J.K. Balbir, p. xvii.
30. As an over-riding principle, the transformation of a dialectic into narrative is central to the novel form and hence is not peculiar to R.K. Narayan.
31. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (London: Merlin, 1971), English trans. Anna Bostok. First published in 1920.
The extent to which a similar disintegration of a total civilization (after colonialism etc.) has occurred in India and how it relates to the novel is a question which needs more detailed investigation.
32. Rosie's outbursts, her almost irrational love for her husband could be placed within the Indian convention of *striya caritra*, roles which a woman is *expected* to play.
33. The intrusion of the imbecile to upset the "idyllic" state of affairs is a dramatic set-piece common to all literatures.
34. Wolfgang Iser, "The Reality of Fiction: A Functionalist Approach to Literature", *New Literary History*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975), pp.7-38.
35. Sujit Mukherjee, "Towards a Literary History of India", *New Literary History*, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), pp.225-234.
36. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1976), pp.26-27.


"HISTORY OR MARXIST *REAL*"
ABSOLUTE SCHISM
"Meta-text I"
Śankara's commentary on the *Vēdanta*
Vision of the *Real* as *construct* (a "freeze") which mediates between the *jīva* and Brahman.
World = *saṃsāra*
māyā = principle of illusion
Brahman = Absolute Being
Ultimate quest: *ātman vidyā* is *Brahman vidyā*
"Text II"
Tulsīdāsa
Rāmacaritamānasa
bhakti text
Form: metrical, religious epic
Mode: symbolic narrative heavily framed
Transformation of dialectic:
(Seventh Book)
māyā = *nartakī* temple dancer
bhakti = Sītā Rāma's beloved
Metaphorical dimension of dialectic
"Text III"
R.K. Narayan
The Guide
Form: Novel
Mode: Narrative
Use of frames but hero discovers "realistic basis for existence"
Transformation of dialectic into a narrative mode
māyā = *nartakī* dancer Rosie character in fiction
bhakta (devotee) = Raju
Tensions because alien form Novel<--->ideology
READER